

**Charter of the
Northeast Temperate Network
Inventory and Monitoring Program
Board of Directors
17 December 2002**

Introduction

Knowing the condition of natural resources is fundamental to protecting and managing National Park Service lands. Scientifically credible data is necessary to make decisions and support management actions. The purpose of the Inventory and Monitoring Program is to develop broadly based, scientifically sound information on the current status and long-term trends in the composition, structure and function of park ecosystems.

As part of its strategy for implementing the Natural Resource Challenge, the National Park Service has created 32 networks of parks linked by geography and shared natural resource characteristics to facilitate collaboration, information sharing, and economies of scale in natural resource management. The strategic network approach was adopted because natural resource inventory, monitoring and other management actions identified in the Natural Resource Challenge need to be initiated as soon as possible in all parks with natural resources to meet service goals and Congressional mandates.

This charter supports the goals of the National Park Service Natural Resource Challenge to inventory and monitor ecosystem health on Park Service lands. The purpose of this document is to describe the basic practices to be used to plan, organize, manage, evaluate and modify the Northeast Temperate Network “Vital Signs” Monitoring Program. The Northeast Temperate Network Network includes 10 parks and a portion of the Appalachian Trail (from ME to PA):

- Acadia National Park (ACAD)
- Appalachian National Scenic Trail (APPA)
- Boston Harbor Islands National recreation Area (BOHA)
- Marsh-Billings-Rockefeller National Historical Park (MABI)
- Minute Man National Historical Park (MIMA)
- Morristown National Historical Park (MORR)
- Roosevelt-Vanderbilt National Historical Sites (ROVA)
- Saint-Gaudens National Historic Site (SAGA)
- Saratoga National Historical Park (SARA)
- Saugus Iron Works National Historic Site (SAIR)
- Weir Farm National Historic Site (WEFA)

The Northeast Temperate Network Board of Directors is comprised of, 11 park superintendents, the Northeast Region I&M Coordinator, the Northeast Temperate Network Coordinator, and the BOSO Chief Scientist. The Board of Directors will pursue

a holistic approach in defining Network management issues and resources of concern, identifying the best place to monitor these resources using scientifically credible standards.

The purpose of this charter is to define the organization of the Northeast Temperate Network (NETN) to develop and execute an Inventory and Monitoring Program which is fully integrated with park natural resource programs and supports the objectives of the Natural Resource Challenge.

Responsibilities of the Board of Directors

The NETN Inventory and Monitoring Board of Directors provides *guidance*, *oversight* and *advocacy* toward development and implementation of the I&M Program for the 11 park units within the network. The major responsibilities of the Board of Directors are to:

- provide general guidance and input on strategies for network inventory and monitoring.
- require accountability and effectiveness for the I&M Program by reviewing progress, quality control, and spending of Network funds.
- provide guidance to the Network Coordinator, Network Data Manager, Technical Steering Committee (See subgroups section) and natural resource staff of the Network's parks in the purpose, design, and implementation of Vital Signs Monitoring and other management activities related to the Natural Resource Challenge.
- decide on strategies and procedures for leveraging Network funds and personnel to best accomplish inventory and monitoring needs of Network parks.
- consult on hiring Network personnel using funding provided to the Network, including base funds and other sources.
- seek additional financial support to leverage the Servicewide funds.
- solicit professional guidance from and partnerships with other governmental agencies, organizations, and individuals.
- serve as advocates for the Natural Resource Challenge and promote understanding of the importance of the Inventory and Monitoring program among park staff, visitors, and decision makers.

Procedures

Board Meetings: A park superintendent will chair the Board of Directors. There will be at least one formal board meeting annually. Any member can call a special meeting of the Board at any time during the year. If travel logistics are difficult to arrange then Board meetings may be held by telephone, video, or internet conference. All members will be notified of all meetings. Formal meetings will require a written agenda distributed at least one week before. When important decisions need to be made details must be included with the agenda so board members can decide whether to attend or send

an alternate. At the end of each meeting members will be designated by the Board to arrange the logistics and agenda for the next meeting. Telephone conference meetings, to deal with a small number of topics, may be called by any member. Simple matters can be resolved via electronic mail. All Board decisions will be documented in meeting minutes.

Alternates and Quorums: Board meetings are open to Technical Steering Committee members and other invitees. Any Board member who cannot participate in a meeting of the Board may assign an alternate or participate via telephone or videoconference. A park superintendent from the Network may not serve as the alternate, or carry the proxy of another park superintendent. If the above mentioned procedures for calling a board meeting are followed then all board members and designated alternates that attend will constitute a quorum; members who do not attend forfeit their right to vote and must accept the Board's decisions.

Decision Making: All decisions are made by consensus. Consensus is an outcome that all Board members can live with even if not ideal from any one viewpoint. If the Board cannot reach a consensus decision; then the matter, with all viewpoints represented, will be referred to the Regional Director for final resolution. All decisions will be documented with deadlines and responsible individuals identified. The Board of Directors will designate one Superintendent to sign documents for the Board once consensus is reached.

Monitoring Plan: A monitoring plan covering the purpose, scope, objectives and goals of the Northeast Temperate Network's Inventory and Monitoring program will be developed by the Network I&M Coordinator, other Network staff, Cooperators and the Technical Steering Committee. The monitoring plan will identify what will be monitored, where, when and how it will be monitored, and how data will be managed. The Monitoring Plan will also describe the relationships among other NPS programs and I&M efforts of other land and resource managers. The Board of Directors will approve this plan. Phase 1 of the monitoring plan will be completed no later than 1 October 2003, Phase 2 will be completed no later than 1 October 2004, and Phase 3 will be completed no later than 1 October 2007.

Annual Administrative Report and Work plan: The Annual Administrative Report and Work Plan is a single report comprised of 2 sections. The Annual Administrative Report, due to WASO 1 November, summarizes Network accomplishments, describes Network expenditures in detail, and provides the necessary accountability for the program. The Work Plan, due to WASO 15 January, describes proposed and actual Network accomplishments and products, identifies responsible partners and cooperators, and establishes a proposed budget for the upcoming fiscal year. Detailed accounting of the use of all I&M program funds assigned to the Network is included in the Annual Administrative Report and Work plan. Annual Administrative Reports and Work plans will be widely distributed and posted on appropriate websites and will provide a documented record of Network accomplishments and expenditures.

Five Year Program Review: Five years from the completion of the Monitoring Plan the Network will undertake a comprehensive program review to be conducted by national and regional NPS specialists and qualified independent specialists from other agencies and organizations. The purpose of this review will be to evaluate accomplishments and products, protocols used for gathering data, data management, fiscal management, and staffing. The Program Review will provide the principal basis for any significant changes in program direction as well as reassignment of resources to any park or office.

Funding: Available I&M program funds will be distributed to Network projects, parks and offices as directed through the Annual Work Plan. An organizational code has been established for the Network and all I&M program funds must be strictly accounted for using a discrete PWE code and disclosed in the Annual Report. Using these funds for purposes other than in support of the Network's strategic and monitoring plans constitutes cause for their reassignment within the Network. Additionally, funds contributed by parks, other NPS programs and other sources will be carefully tracked and reported on.

Staffing:

Staff hired under this program will be supervised and administratively supported by the Network I&M Coordinator in conjunction with the park or office at which they are stationed. The Network will provide administrative support for travel and training. The Network I&M Coordinator will be directly supervised by the Regional I&M Coordinator.

Subgroups

The Northeast Temperate Network Technical Steering Committee will provide subject matter expertise and technical assistance to the Network in the development of a long-term monitoring program. Committee composition will be recommended by the Network resource management staff, the Network and Regional I&M coordinators and approved by the Board of Directors. The NETN Inventory and Monitoring Technical Steering Committee is responsible for assisting in the development and review of specific Inventory and Monitoring Program plans, budgets and hiring proposals.

The Technical Steering Committee will be responsible for:

- Guidance in the compilation and organization of existing park resource information.
- Participating in scoping workshops held to develop a Network monitoring strategy.
- Participating in the prioritization of monitoring objectives and the development of a Network Monitoring Plan.
- Assisting in the selection of vital signs and development of monitoring protocols.
- Coordinating peer review of protocols.
- Evaluating initial sampling designs, methods and protocols.
- Reviewing the Annual Administrative Report and Work Plan.
- Developing materials for and facilitating the Five Year Program Review.

The products and recommendations of the Technical Steering Committee will be presented to the Board by the Network Coordinator for discussion and approval or modification.

When needed the Board of Directors, Technical Steering Committee, Network I&M Coordinator and/or the Regional I&M Coordinator may form groups of specialists to work on a particular task or a particular sub-program area. No such group will be formed without inclusion of a specific “sunset” provision.

Coordination

To be most effective, the Board will need to maintain a close working relationship with the Chief of Natural Resources of each park in the Network, members of the Technical Steering Committee, the Network I&M Coordinator and the Regional I&M Coordinator. Board members are encouraged to participate in and/or keep informed with respect to the work of the Technical Steering Committee. The Network I&M Coordinator will be expected to provide regular briefings (by memoranda, electronic mail or telephone conference) to the Board.

Partnerships

The Network I&M Program must work with others to achieve its natural resource goals. The design and implementation of a successful Vital Signs monitoring program in the Northeast Temperate Network will require cooperation with public agencies, universities, and non-governmental organizations. The Network I&M program will include other land and resource managers (federal, state, and tribal) in the Northeast Temperate Network area. The Network Charter may be amended to identify the conditions under which Board membership may be expanded to include non-NPS participants. In no case will this be done without consensus of the Board.

Role of the Acadia National Park Learning Center

The Acadia National Park Learning Center will serve the Northeast Temperate Network to facilitate and encourage Federal scientists, faculty, graduate students, and other researchers from all disciplines to use the parks in the Network as places of inquiry. Providing such infrastructure will leverage NPS fiscal resources by attracting outside sources of funding to support science in these parks. The Learning Center will bring researchers closer to the park natural resource issues, facilitate collaborative studies, assist park and Network staff, and obtain greater direct and in-kind financial support. By providing access to park resources and limited park logistical support, the Learning Center will leverage significant financial and research assistance for projects identified by Network park managers. The Learning Center will also provide a mechanism for meeting the goal of the I&M Program to make information as accessible as possible. As other learning centers become available within the Network, they will be incorporated into the program.

Annual Reporting

The Network I&M Coordinator will circulate Board and Technical Steering Committee meeting minutes and copies of the Annual Administrative Report and Work Plan to all members of the Board and Technical Steering Committee. The Network I&M Coordinator will be responsible for maintaining the Administrative Record and insuring fiscal accountability.

Amendments

The Board may amend this Charter at any time. The Network I&M Coordinator will provide a 30-day advanced notice to all Board members of any proposed amendments before they are voted on. Amendments will be made by consensus.

Northeast Temperate Network Board of Directors:

Rolf Diamant, Superintendent Marsh-Billings-Rockefeller National Historical Park	Date
Len Bobinchock, Superintendent Acadia National Park	Date
Austin Price, Superintendent Boston Harbor Islands National Recreation Area	Date
Nancy Nelson, Superintendent Minute Man National Historical Park	Date
Michael Henderson, Superintendent Morristown National Historical Park	Date
Sarah Olson, Superintendent Roosevelt-Vanderbilt National Historic Site	Date
John Dryfhout, Superintendent Saint-Gaudens National Historic Site	Date
Steven Kesselman, Superintendent Saugus Iron Works National Historic Site	Date
Doug Lindsay, Superintendent Saratoga National Historical Park	Date
Randy Turner, Superintendent Weir Farm National Historic Site	Date